

HUMAN PHILOSOPHY

AS

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OPPOSED TO THE WORD OF GOD.

AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE ALUMNI OF LA FAYETTE COLLEGE,
EASTON, PA., ON TUESDAY OF COMMENCEMENT
WEEK, JULY 26, 1859,

BY

REV. J. WASHINGTON WOOD,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CHESTER, ORANGE COUNTY, N. Y.

PUBLISHED BY THE ASSOCIATION.

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TUTTLE

CORRESPONDENCE.

EASTON, July 26, 1859.

REV. JAMES W. WOOD,

Dear Sir,—At a meeting of the Alumni of LaFayette College, the undersigned were appointed a Committee to express to you their thanks, for the very able and interesting address delivered by you, before them, at their annual meeting, held this day, and to request a copy of the same for publication.

Yours very respectfully,

B. F. FACKENTHALL, }
FRANCIS MICHLER, } *Committee.*
ELISHA ALLIS, }

EASTON, July 27, 1859.

Messrs. B. F. FACKENTHALL, F. MICHLER AND E. ALLIS,

Gentlemen,—Your favor of yesterday was duly received. The Address you refer to is herewith committed to your disposal.

Very truly yours,

J. W. WOOD.

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ADDRESS.

Gentlemen of the Alumni:—

My appearance before you to-day is a result of your misfortune. The accomplished gentlemen, whom you selected to perform the duties of this hour, have been unable, for the present, to favor the Association with the benefit of their superior abilities; so that you are doomed to endure an affliction from them and an infliction from me. The polite invitation of your committee has given me the honor of addressing you, though I am neither *primus*, nor *secundus*, but a certain *tertium quid*, which means, as the audience will understand, in your favor, not the best you have, but, as good as you could yet.

It is more than a score of years since the first class left the halls of our College, and for so long a time 'some of us have mingled in the great battle of life. Already we are on that eminence, from which we can see the thickly shaded frontier, through which the king's highway, well lighted, leads onward and upward to "things unseen." Whether on the rough edge of battle, or in the general's marquee, the lessons of experience and observation make us feel that "Life is serious, Life is earnest," and that a grave responsibility rests on educated men, who, with loving hearts and beaming eye and elastic tread should lead their race "to glory and to virtue." Our life is allotted in an age of cheerful activities, which, as when nature leaps forth with songs and blossoms from dread winter's reign, are already bursting away from the effete forms of ignorance and misrule, and giving promise of a higher life to sanctified humanity. A spleeny student, full of moping melancholy,

ought to ante-date himself a hundred years. Sweet light is waking the world, and the songs of the morning are full of hope. Galileo is now a freeman, for science is relieved from the incubus of a foul and fossil faith, and bathing in the clear stream of truth, and weaving in her robes the beauties and brilliants of her own realm, all redolent from the fields, she walks forth in the graceful dignity of a queen—as the royal help-meet of a Bible Christianity. All hail! to the nuptials of every department of truth! the church of God, sharply defined by the doctrines of regeneration by the Spirit, and justification through faith in the atonement, is putting on her beautiful garments, and diffusing her heavenly gifts. Her presses do not groan, but their humming is the refrain of the jubilate, first sung by night when a Prince was born in the City of David. Her missionaries, the mightiest men on earth, have already shouldered the gates of the Philistines, while their christian homes, graced with the piety that first sought the Redeemer's tomb, stand in the darkness of heathenism as the lights of the world. Minds of a philosophic mold, when submissive to the mind of God, are making grand achievements towards a satisfactory explanation of mental and moral phenomena; while others, not so submissive, are laboriously whittling out and painting queer images, and labelling them "Ego," or "non Ego"—"das Etwas"—or "das Nichts—das reine Nichts"—which bewilders the superficial and amuses the profound.

But it is good to live associated with the mighty agencies of our day, and to feel their power moving us onward in the path of truth—or, if evil, testing our ability to resist their blind momentum. As the old eagle stirreth up her nest, lest her young should never unfold the wing of high endeavor, the moral forces of these days are so adjusted as to push every educated and honest mind off from the quiet luxury of mere study, and the formalities of recitation drills, so that it may be a beneficent power among men—another layer in the lever by which God would raise the world.

In view of these consentaneous or opposing activities I propose to make some remarks on

HUMAN PHILOSOPHY AS OPPOSED TO THE AUTHORITY OF THE WORD OF GOD.

The reference is to the *false* philosophies of mind and morals, which have obtained currency in some quarters. My plan is not to assume to make a ponderous treatise, or to analyze in detail any one system, but under the freedom of a popular exercise, to take a bird's eye view of several schemes which counterfeit, ignore, or oppose the claims of a Bible Christianity.

Mind governs the world. Thoughts are the instruments of power. The blind momentum of superstition and obstinacy fails to jar the earth, as it once did. Human wisdom, when void of the christian element, is projected before the gaze of men, like pyrotechnics on the brow of night, only to burst in amusing scintillations, and fall useless to the ground. Papal bulls once made the kingdoms tremble, plunging, like African buffalo, straight ahead, without reason or mercy ; but now, how feeble, and how few ! Among all the high contracting powers in the world of mind, we claim the *first place* for the mind of God, and submit that the claim is neither audacious, nor unphilosophical, while the rejection of it is both.

A true philosophy of mind must necessarily take cognizance of the existence and control of God, as revealed in the scriptures—of the dependence and fall of man, and of his recovery, only through supernatural assistance. Were men competent to elaborate, by their own invention, a system of philosophy which should be an ultimate rule and standard for mental and moral conduct, then was the revelation in the Scriptures unnecessary. The Creator does not supernaturally effect for men what they can do for themselves. The Scriptures mark the limits of religious thought, and hence that philosophy, which ignores those limits, and speculates in a region beyond, is, by the necessities of the case, mere speculation, and may be nonsense. Authoritative and ultimate religious truth, supernaturally revealed, is as necessary for the philosopher as for the peasant. Cousin exclaims in rapture, that philosophy is “the light of all lights—the authority of all authorities.” If modesty suggests the lim-

itation of the human mind, and its necessary ignorance on some points, Schelling responds with superb disdain "One sees not wherefore philosophy should pay any attention to incapacity." Yet we venture to ask who, but God in the Scriptures, has spoken intelligently of the absolute and the infinite? Who, but He, knows anything of the essence of spirit, and whether it has any exercise back of its own consciousness? Is it unphilosophical, in a system of natural order, that an infinite Creator should assume, as of right, the control of the creature? What ought to be put before the first Great Cause? and shall the Christian quail before philosophy when he reads—"By faith we know the worlds were made by the word of God, so that the things that are seen, were not made of things which do appear?" No. We demand that the Bible be admitted as teaching us ultimate truths respecting God, and in Him, authoritatively limiting the range of human speculation in the direction of the Absolute and the infinite.

The poet Shelly, who shamefully at times affects to be an Atheist, is yet unable to ignore the presence of Deity, and says—

"The awful shadow of some mighty power
Floats, tho' unseen, above us."

Beyond the nature of an infinite personal God there is absolutely nothing to buoy the wings of the imagination, and that philosopher who describes himself as thinking profoundly in a region where God is not, has a full share of impudence and is an ineffable fool. The teachings of such a philosophy are wild, and of no more value to the world than the cries of penguins around Cape Horn.

Christianity is a life from God, and because it is a life, it is a power. It is for man's highest interest, individually and socially, to be subjected to this power. The facts in natural science that the angles of a given crystal are of a certain size—or, that some animals have a vertebrae, are not more palpable and settled, than the fact that an individual, or a nation, cannot successfully pursue the greatest good without the word of God, and the supernatural power which it proffers. Man needs to be directed and controlled—but, constituted as he is,

that control will be superficial and impotent, unless it refers primarily and mainly to those parts of his being and conduct which are beyond the cognizance of human foresight and law—the understanding and conscience must be reached, and brought into submission to an authority which they will recognize as appropriate and sufficient, and as cognate and correlate with themselves, before the hand and foot will move as they should. An obedience, effected without the consent of these higher and characteristic parts of man's nature, is not only unnatural and forced, but it is dangerous and prophetic of revolution. Now the Bible sets forth a personal God, who claims especially to reign over mind. Himself "a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable," he makes created spirits the special objects of his control, and does not allow the existence of an intelligent being in circumstances where his authority is not pertinent, and His favor essential, to that being's happiness. The nature of Christianity as revealed in the Scriptures, and the experience of our race, have shown that nothing else can be substituted, either wisely or safely, for its authority. It has so far conquered the world of mind that, all shrewd projectors of antagonistic schemes court her name and her glory. It is often easier and more feasible to conform, in appearance, to a predominant sentiment, than to stem the general current. In our country Christianity is a popular and national term. It is therefore, policy to put the word in a conspicuous and bold position, on the forehead of every enterprise which involves religious considerations. Often the more anti-christian is the scheme to which it is affixed the greater will be its prominence, and the more loudly will its abettors cry—"Hoc signo vinces."

These sentiments are counteracted or ignored, in the philosophy (falsely so called) to which I refer. As we approach that part of our subject, it will probably not be unnatural to begin with an examination of the human head. This we have exhibited to us—like bibles for the blind, *in relief*, to be read through the ends of the fingers. Phrenology presents us with an example of geometrical metaphysics, whereby, the human head, embossed, reveals the soul in triangles and trapeziums. Mr. Combe reckons thirty-five elevations, under which the inner

man protrudes towards the outward world—but science is cumulative—and Professor Fowler details eighty-three in his mental geography, each of which has its counterpart, like Ebal and Gerizim of old, for cursing and blessing. These, he says, are “independent faculties, each of which exercises a distinct class of functions.” But whether the soul is material or immaterial, Mr. Combe answers, “The solution of this question is not only unimportant, but impossible.” There is found moreover, in all these tumuli, no chamber for the human will, and our philosophers declare, there is no such faculty. Mr. Spurzheim says: “Will is no more a fundamental power than is the instinct of animals. It is only the effect of every primitive faculty of the mind. Each faculty being active produces an inclination—a kind of will.” Having substituted instincts, impulses, and natural tendencies for a responsible will, Mr. Combe represents the convicted criminal, “as the victim of his own nature and external condition, who is to be pitied more than blamed.” His apology for the crimes of pope Alexander VI., is as good as our New-York Archbishop could invent, for he says, “such a brain is no more adequate to the manifestation of christian virtues, than the brain of an idiot is to the exhibition of the intellect of a Leibnitz, or a Bacon.” “Divines,” says he, “should introduce the natural laws into their discourses, and not represent Christianity as a system of spiritual influences—of internal operations on the soul.”

Gentlemen of the Bar and Pulpit, here are ethics for your practice and your homilies. The old Bible doctrine of the responsibility and guilt of man, as having a will, is obsolete since the advent of craniology. Abandon your penalties, and commiserate the rascal for the unfortunate size of his cerebellum and executive knobs. Let those who sit in ermine learn to manipulate the heads of their prisoners, and issue their mandamus for the excitement of the tardy organs of virtue. Let men of erudition know the mistake of Edwards in giving the world a treatise on the will, and not the skull, and let casuists study bones instead of consciences. Phrenology, in fact, as its Magi apply it to educational and moral interests, is so gross a materialism, and so subversive of scriptural truth, as scarcely to

merit a denial. It is a caricature of science and an outrage against Christianity.

But after all, "the human head divine" is an interesting laboratory of thought. It is not always "in wandering mases lost." Its products are often brilliant, even if they are not solid, and weighty, though they be wicked. We are indebted to Germany—to her laborers, and patient investigators, and writers—to her noble and flexible language, rivalling the tongue of Homer and Plato in its copiousness, strength and beauty, for many of our most useful books. In its editions of the classics, in philosophy, in literary criticisms, and some departments of Biblical interpretations, in history and poetry, the language of Goethe, Schelling and Olshausen contains immense stores of the most useful knowledge; those stores will yet nourish and invigorate an Evangelical faith in Europe, and contribute largely to bless the world. But much of its philosophy of mind and morals is lamentably destitute, not of vigor and brilliancy so much, as of the Scriptural element and common sense.

Lord Bacon taught the inquirer to look at the relations and movements of things; the German, looks at the things themselves. The inductive school sees the world as it is, spread out in those relations of power and beauty, which are believed to bear the impress of the Great Designer; the rationalistic school, first strips everything of all its qualities and relations, and looks at it in the abstract state—the absolute state. After taking the universe apart, they put it together according to their own wisdom. Like tyros in mechanics, they get the watch apart without much injury, but when they have put it together, you cannot tell whether it is a time-piece or a turnip.

As to what is meant by the absolute, it is difficult to understand. The higher German philosophy seldom uses illustrations, because it conceives of everything as out of existence; but the English mind lays hold of these, as of a walking cane, to spirit its progress. You have seen a species of swallow dig holes in the high-land cliffs, where they may lay and brood; the Baconian method of investigating those holes, would be to climb up and look in—but our Teutonic friends pronounce that a very clumsy and unscientific mode of procedure, and they advise you

to remove the entire hill, and leave the holes suspended *in puris naturalibus*, and then study them.

These philosophers are not willing to begin with anything that God has made—not even with that Great Being himself, but aspire to be themselves original creatures. The process is truly original. They first put everything out of existence, including God and themselves, and then begin to manipulate their first production as a pure nothing—*das reine Nichts*; but this is not recognised, after all, as the starting point. The first object on which the philosophic eye rests, is *the relation* of this nothing to nothing else. Through this relation the reciprocal action of “the me” and “the not me” begins, and a universe is the result—not all at once, but by development. Thus runs poor reason under the philosopher’s cap, until Prof. Fichte announces to his class, “To-morrow, gentlemen, I shall create God.”

The philosophy of Schelling, who was a pupil of Fichte, is based upon what he calls the absolute. His definition is—“the absolute is neither infinite nor finite, neither to know nor to be, neither subject nor object; but that wherein all opposition of subject and object, knowledge and existence, spirit and inert matter, ideal and real, together with all other differences and distinctions, are absorbed and disappear.” However wild and irreligious such a definition is, it is a comfort to be able to understand something when walking in the wilderness of transcendental thoughts. The notion of a universal annihilation is conceivable.

Hegel, Professor at Heidelberg, brought German metaphysics to perfection, by making its darkness more profound, and its folly more palpable. It is well known to all thinkers, that correct and lucid definitions are of the first importance in a scientific discussion. None are more seriously careful in this regard than Professor Hegel. Lest I should be thought to caricature his opinions, may I be allowed, without the imputation of pendency, to repeat, in his own language and words, his definition of an idea. If any are not familiar with the German, let them not indulge in premature regrets, for they will get about the same sense as those who are:—“Die idee ist der Verlauf, dass der Begriff als die Allgemeinheit, welche Einzelheit ist, sich

zur Objectivität und zum gegensatz gegen dieselbe bestimmt ; und diese Ausserlichkeit, die den Begriff zu ihrer substanz hat durch ihre immanente Dialektic sich in die Subjectivität zuruck fuhrte.'—*i.e.*, "An idea is the course that the notion, as the generalness, which is singleness, determines itself to the objectivity, and to the opposition against the same ; and this externality, which has the notion to its substance through its immanent dialectic, brings itself back in the subjectivity."

Will not whole volumes, as perspicuous as this, enable one to understand Cousin when he says, "philosophy is the light of lights," and why an admirer of Hegel said at his grave, "the system is perfect. Go ye into all the world and preach this new Gospel!"

The application of transcendental philosophy to religion, goes to show that there is no personal and self-existent God, until *after* he has been developed in nature. The finite regresses into the infinite—nature returns towards the absolute, and in this return, God is unfolded and realised. But even then his personality and consciousness are not separate from those of men, but included and expressed in them—Nature is God extended. The plain English of the whole is, "*There is no God!*" In the history of Rationalism, by Amand Saintes, the profound writer, who published the letters of Schleiermacker on the Lucinde of Schelling, is represented as saying, that the world would have been better off if it had never heard the name of God!

A philosophy which reduces the universe to an abstraction, and makes that abstraction the womb from which God is developed, has, of course, no trouble in ignoring the Scripture, and the life by faith in a Redeemer—that book is a human production, and a myth at that. Its doctrines are credible, only as they are found in agreement with the philosophy in question, which is seldom the case. The influence of this philosophy in disturbing confidence in a Scriptural religion has extended, more from the position of its authors than from any force of truth in itself. They have been, for the most part, the authorised teachers in the largest universities in the world, with access to almost all the literature extant among men, and with the presses and funds of Europe largely at their command. It has

begotten a desire among learned men, of the class referred to, to be original, rather than Scriptural, and a willingness to be reputed great, without being right. Baron Bunsen is just out in an English dress, with the startling discovery that man was on the earth 20,000 years before Christ. This readiness to sacrifice the Scriptures at the shrine of human learning, has been but feebly counteracted in the land of its birth; for even Evangelical men like Hengstenberg and Olshausen are not wholly free from mysticism. The civil authorities, who superintend the Church, do not read their Bibles enough to know how to keep it pure. The King of Prussia became alarmed at the influence of the Hegelian philosophy, and would fain be a nursing father to Zion, so he employed Schelling to rebut Hegelianism. But, Schellingism turned out to be the worse of the two. Schelling removed from Munich to Berlin, but evidently left his Bible at the former place—as in Bunyan's Holy War, "Mr. Forget-Good was made recorder of the town of Mansoul."—England and America share the honor of furnishing men, of no small stature, who dare to stand by the Word of God. Stewart, Robinson, Lewis, Barnes, Alexander, Hodge, and Park stand, like Joshua on Gibeon, to hold the sun from going down till the victory is won.

Just now, in Europe and America, the transcendental stock is deteriorating from both the boldness and frankness of the earlier sires, but has improved somewhat in sleekness and nimbleness. Among these latter disciples, we meet with nothing more frequently than an explicit admission of a Scriptural proposition in its abstract form, and an advocacy of opinions which palpably contradict it. If the question is, Was Paul inspired? Certainly he was, they reply, for all great minds are inspired. All genius is a spark from Deity. Demosthenes was inspired to defend his country by eloquence, Washington by the sword, Milton to sing of Paradise, and Longfellow of Hiawatha. Was Jesus sent from God? Yes, and so were Luther and Edwards. Thus they admit a Scripture truth, and claim credit for frankness, but proceed to eviscerate it of its living contents.

These phenomena of the human mind, in the persistent pursuit of the veriest vagaries, are at once proof of its limitation.

its weakness, and its willfulness. Some of the mightiest intellects of the nineteenth century have resolved to reverence nothing but their own conclusions, and to believe nothing that was ever believed before. With indomitable perseverance, and self-cheering complacency, they have constructed roads to no where, and windows which nobody can see through, and done what in them lies, to engineer the world back into the *tohu* and *bohu* of primeval chaos. It appears to be as much a matter of surprise to them, that others do not understand their theories, as it was to Sancho Panza that his master did not relish his proverbs. It is related that a professor in one of our theological seminaries, while on a visit to Europe, had a personal interview with a Prussian philosopher on the higher mysteries of Teutonic metaphysics. The American professor insisted on a precise definition of every term used, and a lucid explanation of each proposition announced. The philosopher explained and defined, and defined and explained, but every new explanation and definition seemed only to suggest a new difficulty to the acuteness or obtuseness of the quiet, imperturbable Yankee, when the poor German, astonished and grieved, lifted both hands and eyes to heaven, and exclaimed, "*Mein Gott*; forgive Christopher Columbus for ever having discovered America!"

The present antagonism between Evangelical truth and a vain philosophy, is only another instance under the law of reproduction, showing that "that which has been, is now." Men are willing to repeat a thousand times the experiment of seeking good without God, which, like the bough loaded with fruit hanging over the head of Tantalus, always eludes their efforts to reach it. The Reformation was mainly directed against the scholasticism which had overwhelmed the Roman world. The Platonists and the Eclectics in the third century sought to make all religions coalesce, and Christ was put on a level with Pythagoras and Empedocles. Manes rose, and the turbid streams of Persian mysticism were mingled with the dark floods of Gnosticism in the West. The opinions of men gradually usurped the place of the authority of God in the Scriptures. The acutest minds discussed the most puerile subjects, and scholastic decisions gradually became the staple of theology.

And now were exhibited the legitimate and inevitable results of merely human philosophy, in the degradation of every thing sacred, and scandalization of all that is good. The reduction of human wisdom alone to religious practice always makes a pandemonium. The pagan Saturnalia was introduced into the Church, with its wild orgies and shameful excesses. The "Festival of the Ass" conducted that animal to the altar, caparisoned in sacerdotal robes, and supplied him with provender while religious service was performed before him. The ass wisely fed on the hay and left the priest and the people to do the braying. Then came the "Feast of Fools," wherein a boy bishop, or "the Pope of Fools," burlesqued the worship of God, and ecclesiastics and laymen shared in the pleasures of waltzing and obscenity in the temple of Deity. "The glutton mass," the "Lord of Misrule," and the "Abbot of Unreason," were prominent in the ceremonials of religion, while the Vicar of Christ gave his benediction on the whole. This was philosophy without the Bible, bringing forth fruit after its kind. The antiquarian is amused, and the christian grieved, in reading the history of the middle ages. The organization of all this grotesqueness and blasphemy is preserved in that corporation, whose characteristic is the substitution of the opinions and decrees of men for the word of God. The life of that Upas tree, now called Romanism, was, when a germ, called philosophy, and it was against its gnarly trunk that the mighty Luther flung the axe of the word of God.

So now transcendentalism and Romanism are alike, in that they both reject the ultimate authority of the word of God. What boots it, whether that authority is rejected in the groves of the Academy, or the conclaves of Cardinals? Hegel's treatise on nothing, and the dogma of the immaculate conception have a family likeness, and the records show that they were begotten of speculative philosophy. That philosophy is the *pabulum* of popery. Writers are mistaken, who deny that the Pope is a philosopher. The world is suspicious of divinity—his dearest children are fighting in his own door yard, so that it is impossible for a bachelor destitute of grace, to bear what he elves, without metaphysics. His infallibility has always been tran-

scendental—his inspiration speculative and his usefulness doubtful. When Schelling begins at the little end of nothing annihilated, and makes a universe, and a priest creates God from a wafer, impartiality declares both equally transcendental and nonsensical. And thus it would not be difficult, nor uninteresting, to run the parallel between Romanism and Rationalism through the whole length of both, and show that both are the products of the human mind in its lapsed and darkened state—the wild philosophy of wandering willfulness, baseless in nature—Christless in theory, wicked in practice, and hopeless in prospect.

But these systems are not only alike and parallel, they are mutually productive of each other, like the “*das Nichts*,” and “*das Andernichts*”—the nothing and the nothing else, of Hegel. The eye of the informed and impartial observer cannot fail to see that, as Romanism sprang from the philosophy of the third and fourth centuries, so modern rationalism is a sprout from the roots of the old tree which the reformers girdled. It could not well have its rise and its influence, except in conjunction with a faith which rests on man, instead of God—a religion of the imagination, instead of the Bible, which justifies men for good works which they never perform, or punishes them in a limbo that has no existence. Rationalism is the philosophy of Romanism, and Romanism is the religion of Rationalism. Philosophy must have a religion, and religion must have a philosophy. If the philosophy is a product of the human will, discarding the authority of the Bible and setting up for itself, the religion, which accompanies it, will have the same marks; and if the religion is from men and not from heaven, the philosophy will acknowledge no other origin.

Romanism is a religion of the imagination, and rationalism a philosophy of the imagination. They unite in many points, but especially in appearing to be what they are not. With an apparent regard for the Bible, Rome has taught the world to ignore it, and to regard the dogmas of her casuists, and the decrees of her councils. She has assumed to be inspired, but never has proved it, and to be infallible, but has often blundered. She dispenses pardons which she does not possess, and grace which

does no good. She professes to be the light of the world, yet has kept it in darkness, and to be the friend of intelligence, yet hates a free press. The reality of Romanism is what men make her to be, not what she professes. The counterpart of this pretentious faith is an imaginative and vaunting philosophy, which promises more than it performs, makes facts from fancies. To correspond with the religion, its definitions must be nonsense—its truths abstractions, and its logic so geared as to draw grave conclusions out of nothing. It must assume to know where it is really ignorant, and repudiate all reason and authority but its own.

This philosophy and religion cannot be separated; like the Siamese Twins, the life of each depends on their union. The wine of Rome's fornication, with which she has made the nations drunk, is a speculative transcendental philosophy—this clothes the priest with power, transubstantiates the wafer, makes madonnas wink, and multiplies the sale and raises the tariff of relics. A philosophy which pretends to account for these phenomena in their favor, is the more transcendental, because it assumes to be divinely sublimated, and conversant with things unseen. Kant, Spinoza and Fichte did not traverse a more unreal region in their speculations, nor perpetuate a greater fraud on the understanding, than does every Roman Bishop in his' mystical devotions. Both ape the divine, and make a show of the profound, while all is hollow and deceitful.

Yet there is power in these combinations. There is a point in the history of every mind, where it "does not like to retain God in its knowledge," and where it is in danger of abandonment to its own imagination. The interests of the soul loom up, vast, profound, awful, and there is a certain, fearful looking. If at that moment a man can be furnished with a philosophy and a religion, ready made and of easy fit, which shall *represent*, but *not realise*, to him those interests, accomplished with a gorgeous ceremonial policy of insurance on his spiritual estate, he is likely to be converted at once into a philosopher and a religionist, and to be filled with complacency towards some proxy father in God. Thus a great politician may slide into a cathedral, to worship in the day time by gas light. Under no bigoted prejudices

towards established order, with ungloved finger, he dips the holy water, and, as he reverently kneels on the mosaic, for want of a seat, he feels willing to endure the ache of his knee-pans, because he has sinned in Congress. Above him are angels in stucco, the only kind he is not loth to meet; he listens with classic taste to the organ's notes reverberating through corridor and nave, while the Latin, in bewitching soprano, makes worship charming, the gorgeous altar on wheels, the graceful genuflexions and crossings, the sprinkling of water, the sombre light, the sonorous recitations of Mediaeval Latin, the marching of boys, all dispose him heartily to say Amen when the bell rings. Confiding conscience to those whose business it is to keep it, he returns to the street, convinced that the zeal of the Bible sects is an annoyance to the country. The honors of the day engage his thoughts, and he soliloquizes as he walks, "to shoot, or to be shot? that is the question."

The potency of a vain philosophy is not confined to cultivated minds, but through them it reaches the masses, loosening humanity from its safe moorings in revealed truth. It rules Asia through Confucius and Zoroaster, Africa through Fetichism, and Europe through Rationalism. With insidious advances, it has permeated a portion of the American mind, and held it in vassalage as with the spell of an enchantress. Akin to the oriental speculations, which annul the authority of the word of God, is the crafty plan which has found a metropolis for the saints, in the highlands of the west. The economy of Mormonism is very much like that of Romanism, because it is difficult to invent anything worse. It has a prophet for a pope, apostles for cardinals, Danites for Jesuits, the roll in the Egyptian tongue instead of the decrees of councils in Latin—it regards the gentiles as Rome does heretics—it brings into practice the theology of Den—has saints as holy as some of the fathers, and women as useful as the nuns. Fanaticism has its philosophy, and he would fail to account for the phenomena of Mormonism, who should consider only its outward manifestations. The beginning of that delusion is at the point, where the human mind resolves to diverge from the authority of the Scriptures, and the angle of its divergence can be measured only by the law of God. Human

reason can neither sound its depths, nor control its zeal. Brigham Young is a transcendentalist, and, having largely introduced the female element into his politics, his philosophy puzzles even the President of the United States. Located on the apex of North America, and, providentially, drifted up to its Salt Lake, they are a sublimated people, and probably as high as their system will carry them; for if Mormons go to heaven by virtue of their peculiarities, we might prudently say with the servant of a profligate nobleman, "If he has gone to heaven, it is not best to have it known, lest others might be deterred from wishing to go there."

Notions of social reform, the most visionary and impracticable, take a strong hold of the mind of some, who get principles from their own preferences, rather than from the Bible. Under the profession of a liberality, whose basis is selfishness, and a form which involves its own dissolution, agrarian and libertine sentiments are put forth, as pertinent and sufficient, to remove all the evils of our social state. The reformers of this school affect to revere the Scriptures and to apply them to practice, yet the christian element in their schemes is so much smaller than a grain of mustard-seed, that a spiritual vision, with the power of Lord Rosse's telescope, would fail to detect it. Who has not heard the low growl of agrarianism in New York and Philadelphia, demanding the virtual abolition of the Sabbath and its transmutation into that carnival, which a skeptical philosophy and a sensual religion has made the sacred day to be in Europe. It proposes to make capital a god—to give the working man a pastime that will lead him to ruin, and to facilitate the attendance on worship by annulling the Decalogue. The philosophers of this way assume to be the illustrators in chief of christian philanthropy, while, in reality, they form a clique wherein is gathered much of the feeble infidelity of our times, which goads its victims on to the sacrifice of character and property. These inveigh with vehemence against the Church, for her tardy benevolence towards the indolent poor, and with cool serenity assume for their "common" the honors of the good Samaritan. "Bear ye one another's burden, and so fulfill the law of Christ," was the motto of the phalanx; and how beautifully it was car-

ried out, when cock-crowing ceased on the adjacent farms, and the treasurer carried off the capital of the brotherhood. Men who would live by their wits, yet find their stock too small, profess a rapid edification by the Scriptural instance where, "they had all things common," and still hold themselves ready to revive apostolic times, by voting themselves a farm—while they gravely question Paul's inspiration when he says, "If any would not work, neither should he eat." But, the world ought to be old enough to know that, every project for making man happy is visionary and self-combustive, which ignores the moral disease of humanity, and denies the absolute necessity of a supernatural remedy.

I have spoken freely of the philosophers of Germany. Justice to them and myself invites me to observe, how many noble exponents of a christian philosophy that country affords. It were inexcusable to class the evangelical Neander with the pantheistic Strauss, or the believing and urbane Ullman with the blaspheming Fichte. Indeed the recent skepticism of Germany had its paternity across the channel, in the sophistries of Hume, and the cowardly sneers of Gibbon, who, disgusted with the history of a religion invented by man, invented its counterpart in a vain philosophy. The naturalism and the veiled atheism of the class referred to, have been fully exposed by learned critics. They deserve the scorn of the christian world. When men assume the prerogatives of God, who should defend them? A pride of intellect has led these modern gnostics on—one theorist has provoked another to rival or excel him in originality—one has split hairs and another has split the splits, and they have so knocked each other on the head that they see stars where none exist. They are.

"Gens ratione ferox, et mentem pasta chimæris."

"A race with reason mad, and fed upon chimeras."

A true philosophy must *begin* with God, and arrange everything in order, form and subjection to Him. Reason may consider the character and extent of His existence, but the liberty to inquire after God does not involve the liberty of denying His existence. Here is a limitation of reason, which we hold to be responsible. Is a rational being at liberty to deny everything,

if he pleases, because he is rational? That were unreason.—Man is finite. The idea of a deity is of the nature of an axiom to the human mind. Reason begins with God. The mind must repose on something, before it unfolds its thoughts. Thus the great Augustine says, “Faith precedes intellect, but it involves intellect.” Hence the formula of true reason is not, philosophy *or* faith, but, faith and philosophy. Faith fastens to God, and is the hook on which the chain of reason hangs below. The Creator made no man capable of sound reason in a state of separation from himself. If a man wishes to enjoy the pleasure of children in swinging, he must first attach the swing-rope to a beam above, and then swing—but how foolish to refuse thus to fasten the rope, and seizing his own waistband, to think to swing himself. This is what we reprehend, in the philosophers referred to, that they, in theorizing, abstract themselves from God, and then assume to be *par excellence*, the reasoners of the world—while, by the necessities of the case, such an abstraction turns a wise man into a fool.

And the *word* of God is as good as himself to rest upon.—Reason must listen when He speaks, and know that it is He speaking, and not another. When His will is known, it is unreason to ignore it, or to go behind it. In regard to all mental and moral questions, a man, outside of the circumference of the expressed will of God, is beyond the necessary conditions of human reason, and therefore cannot reason. It is this fact which stamps all anti-biblical theories in metaphysics with folly, and classes them with the chimeras of a fabulous age.

I will trespass on your indulgence no longer. A kind Providence has permitted us the greetings of another Commencement; we return to LaFayette the best honored of all her guests—for who of us does not hold, while he enjoys but one, that her diplomas are better than her doctorates? The one was well earned in the studying of many a hard problem, and bestowed by learned and honored professors and curators—the other—“sour grapes.” What reminiscences spring into life again by these re-unions? Those days of manual labor and long lessons—the rearing of yonder noble pile, and the jolly transposition of lexicons and trunks from the banks of the Lehigh to that

crown of the borough; the strong temperance principles that obtained among trustees and faculty, when they ordered us to cut down the apple-trees on the campus, and work them up into bench-screws and fiddles—the literary contests, and the studied productions, which we poured into the ears of patient and indulgent audiences in this lower vale. Do you not remember, when now-a-days you see the floral missiles flung approvingly, perhaps affectionately, at the feet of graduates, how, “long time ago,” we received our honors without any such demonstrations? Are we then envious because of the bouquets? Oh, no—no. In those days of yore the ladies, as kind heaven would have it, left the flowers to hang upon their native stem, and shed their fragrance round their homes, while they gave themselves to us. We are satisfied. Though there was no professorship of Anglo-Saxon and English, we had learned from an old poet of the Saxons that—

“Life maaks an race to run us on,
But selden laurel dekt his braew.
Hwa ran the race alone.”

Gentlemen, I have done. Let us return to our posts, with warmer hearts and firmer purposes, in the service of the right and the good. Christianity will live and triumph. The Star of Bethlehem is in the ascendant, and our Alma Mater expects every Alumnus to do his duty.

MINUTES

Of the Meeting of the Alumni of LaFayette College, 1859.



[In view of the change contemplated in the Exercises of the Meetings of the Alumni of LaFayette College, the Standing Committee have thought proper to append to the Address the Proceedings of the Association at the last Commencement. It will be seen that the next Annual Address is dispensed with, and in its stead is substituted a *Re-Union* of all the Graduates present at Commencement. The time allotted to it, will be filled up by those representing the different classes with short speeches, reminiscences of college life, class histories, &c., &c. The change is but an experiment, resulting from the settled conviction in the minds of those who have been present at the commencements of the past few years, that something must be done to give more life and interest to the meetings of the Alumni. A full attendance next year will test the merits of the change. Such course can then be adopted for the future as will promote the best interests of the Association.]

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, July 26, 1859.

The Association convened, and was opened with prayer by the Rev. David M. James. The Annual Election was then held, and the following gentlemen were elected Officers of the Association for the ensuing year:—

Edward F. Stewart, President,
Rev. E. Ferrier, Vice-President,

Selden J. Coffin, Secretary,
Elisha Allis, Treasurer.

On motion, it was resolved, That the thanks of the Association be presented to the Rev. James W. Wood for the Address delivered by him, and that a copy be requested for publication.

Messrs. B. F. Fackenthall, F. Michler and E. Allis were appointed the Committee to carry out the purpose of the resolution.

It was then moved by Mr. E. Allis, That a change be made in the Order of Exercises, by which, on the coming year, the Address of the Orator may be dispensed with, and a *Re-Union* be held, at which brief Addresses shall be made by those representing the various Classes of the Graduates.

After some discussion, the motion was carried.

B. F. Stem, E. Allis and S. J. Coffin were appointed the Standing Committee for the ensuing year, with discretionary power to make all the necessary arrangements for the *Re-Union*.

On motion, the Association adjourned, to meet at the call of the President.—Closed with prayer.

EDWARD F. STEWART, *President*.

SELDEN J. COFFIN, *Secretary*.